

Jerry Shank and Robert N. Brumet died because they were ordered to fly planes that might better have been consigned to the scrap heap.

TRAINERS

They were T-28's. The "T" stands for "trainer," and that's all it was intended to be. It was outmoded in 1953. It is practically the last two-seated propeller-driven craft in the Air Force's inventory.

Yet out here we've loaded this antiquated trainer's wings with 500-pound bombs and napalm so that if one is flown long enough it's inevitable that its wings will drop off. The men who fly them know that.

Politically, of course, the T-28 has its points. No one, including the Reds, could seriously object to it.

By using it, we're respecting the armistice terms of the 1954 Geneva Convention, in that we're not introducing new equipment into Vietnam.

BODY FOR PROOF

Also, we can put a Vietnamese in the rear seat, contending he's a student pilot.

Actually, few of them even speak English and instruction is nonexistent.

But if a T-28 crashes, there will be a Vietnamese body in the wreckage, and apparently that's important in this game of hide-and-seek we're playing here.

I'm glad I don't have it on my conscience. As for Jerry Shank and Bob Brumet—every time they put their planes into a dive they must have wondered if they would come out.

On April 9, Capt. Robert Brumet, 36, put his craft into a dive and it didn't come out. His buddies, flying nearby, saw the wings fall off and watched in horror as the plane plowed into the paddies.

They called over their radios for the choppers to come in and pick up what was left. The choppers didn't get there soon enough. The Vietcong got there first.

I hope Bob was dead when they found him, because these are the same people who ceremoniously broke the arms and legs of a district leader's wife at Kien Long recently and then killed her. That's the kind of enemy we face.

We need equipment we can count on to keep us out of their hands.

Captain Brumet was full of love of living and as fine a fighter pilot and a man as you could want.

ANOTHER ONE

On March 24, Jerry Shank put his ship into a dive between Soc Trang and Back Lieu and its wing separated from the fuselage.

Jerry was Capt. Edwin G. Shank, 27, from Winamac, Ind. When they shipped his body back, every shop and office in his hometown closed for the day.

Jerry was liked by everybody, and most everybody felt the same way about him. He left a wife and four children.

MATE PILOT

Before he came to Vietnam, he was a MATS transport pilot. He graduated from Notre Dame in 1950 with a degree in architectural engineering.

He did his stint in the Air Force Reserve, liked it and decided to make flying his career.

Jerry had one consuming ambition: He dreamed of being the first American to land on the moon. Maybe he could have done it. He had all the qualifications.

It makes you wonder what kind of official thinking justifies taking the lives of two such young men—and there have been at least two others—and you make up your mind you will find out when you get home.

Such decisions may be easy to come by in Washington, where men are statistics and casualty rates are a wavering line on a weekly chart.

But they're harder to take when you know

the brave men who honestly fear their planes—because they can't trust the craft to do the job they're asked to do in their country's name.

REPLACEMENT

The Pentagon says it's replacing the T-28 with a Navy carrier plane, the AD-4, more adaptable to dive bombing. And that's good. But why wait until now?

Moreover, the Pentagon didn't say when this would be done. And every day brave fighting men take off from Soc Trang in their T-28's, hoping the wings will stay glued until those new jobs get here.

BRAVE MEN BETRAYED

Air Force Capt. Jerry Shank is 1 of 131 American fighting men who have lost their lives in combat since the United States began its program of massive assistance to South Vietnam in December 1961. In common with the rest of these brave men, Jerry Shank left a legacy of heartbreak, of a widow's empty, endless loneliness, of little children for whom a smiling photograph must forever be the inadequate substitute for a father's strong arms and loving counsel.

But Jerry Shank left something more than that. He was an articulate, angry man, and he left behind a poignant recital of how courageous young Americans are being betrayed by ancient equipment that is no longer equal to the demands of modern aerial combat.

Jim G. Lucas, a combat correspondent who has shared danger and despair with American troops in three wars, tells Captain Shank's story that no reader will soon forget. He tells it, we think, with cold indignation that is wholly justified. Letters written to his wife by Captain Shank have been published in Life magazine and in U.S. News & World Report. With Jim's story, written from the Soc Trang airstrip in the steaming guerrilla-infested Mekong Delta, they give a shocking account of American men whose courage and devotion is being made a grisly mockery by obsolescent equipment.

Captain Shank died in a T-28, an aging, propeller-driven trainer that was never designed for combat. Loaded with 500-pound bombs and napalm tanks, it cannot indefinitely endure the stresses of repeated dive-bombing runs. Eventually the wings come off. That happened to Captain Shank's airplane on March 24. On April 9 it happened to the T-28 piloted by Capt. Robert Brumet.

Nor is the T-28 the whole story of courageous young American pilots being betrayed by war-weary, obsolescent aircraft. The B-26, a World War II attack bomber, was outmoded on V-J Day. Until recently it was flying combat sorties in Vietnam and, as Jerry Shank's letters have made brutally explicit, still killing American men. The H-21 ("Flying Banana") helicopter has done yeoman duty in Vietnam, but it is old and slow and is by no means the Nation's best combat-lift chopper. It, too, imposes unnecessary risks on the men who fly it.

Attempts to obtain an explanation of why we are asking our men to fight with inferior equipment have elicited no coherent reply. Some sources habitually insist the T-28 is ideal for antiguerrilla warfare because it is slower than modern aircraft. But no one would suggest that its habit of shedding wings fits it for anything other than a flying coffin.

The loss of Captain Shank and Captain Brumet emphasizes much that is wrong with our war in southeast Asia. The prevailing opinion of the men who are fighting it is that we are losing. Jim Lucas' sorrowing account of young Americans dying in the flaming wreckage of obsolete airplanes gives a tragic insight into one of the reasons we are losing.

Our men deserve better from those of us who remain safe back home.

Coin Shortage Must Be Solved

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

HON. BOB CASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 1964

Mr. CASEY. Mr. Speaker, I have today introduced a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to contract with private industry for the minting of coins of the United States.

I was motivated to introduce this bill upon learning on one of my recent visits home of the tremendous shortage of coins in the Houston area and finding that this was not a localized condition but that the shortage is acute throughout the Nation.

Unless we turn to private industry for relief, I foresee no particular relief for several years. In fact, it may even grow more acute.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. William McC. Martin, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, sent me a letter which backs up my prediction. He also estimates that no relief will come for several years.

I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that early action will be taken upon this measure to give the business community of the United States early relief in this crisis.

The following is the letter I received from Mr. Martin, which I think should be ample proof of the need of this legislation:

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE
FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM,
Washington, D.C., May 11, 1964.

HON. BOB CASEY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CASEY: This refers to your letter of May 5, in which you ask about the seriousness of the shortage of coin, suspected causes, and possible remedies, and also request that additional supplies of coin be sent to the Houston, Tex., area.

The coin shortage is nationwide, as you mention you have read. The basic problem stems from the fact that production by the mint has not been able to keep pace with the rapid increase in the use of coin. Expansion in the demand for coin has been caused by a number of factors, including greater use of vending machines, parking meters, coin telephones, coin-operated laundry and dry cleaning machines, and toll roads; extension of school hot lunch programs and of the scope of sales taxes; a marked increase in the number of coin collectors, dealers, and investors; and basically, of course, the general growth in population. Also, any fear on the part of the business community that spillover coin may not be available as needed tends to retard the flow of excess coin back to Federal Reserve banks for redistribution.

The Bureau of the Mint has asked Congress for additional appropriations to build a new mint in Philadelphia and to permit overtime operations at the existing mints in Philadelphia and Denver. While relief from the new Philadelphia Mint is at best 2 or 3 years away, funds to permit a full program of overtime operations at the existing facilities would somewhat ease present conditions and seem to be a move which would most quickly start the flow of additional coins to the commercial banks.

and I have to keep my mouth shut and let it wasted over here.

Mr. Moore reports: "There is little confidence among Americans working at the combat level that corruption will be significantly diminished by the announcement of Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, the new South Vietnam leader, that he will jail embezzlers of up to \$1,000 and shoot anyone who steals more than that."

RESTAINTS AND DELAY

Mr. Moore says: "The biggest single fault in the Vietnamese military system is its chronic inability to react quickly." He cites "a heartbreaking example":

On March 26, two Americans were reported overdue and presumed down on a flight over a jungle area. Vietnamese rangers were asked to join the ground search.

It took 2 days just to get permission—first from a Vietnamese general and then from the district and provincial political chiefs.

Ranger officers then refused to move until they got reserves to stand by in their absence—and a special round of field rations. This cost 3 more days of delay.

On April 1, the rangers finally were flown to a camp from which they were to start a search. Then came word that a new Vietnamese commander was arriving the next day for an inspection—and the rangers had to provide an honor guard.

It was April 3—8 days after the plane went down—when the search finally got underway.

HOW TO HANDLE SNIPERS: "WITHDRAW"

Here is an example, cited by Mr. Moore, of how Vietnamese can turn U.S. military tactics into tactics of retreat: "If the Secretary of Defense really wants to see at firsthand some of the reasons we cannot win this war in Vietnam without some policy changes, he should spend a week at one of the Special Forces B teams. They are truly microcosms of the entire war. Most of our basic frustrations and quandaries are reflected in a B team's daily incidents."

"At one B team I found the operations officer laughing wryly over the translation of a recent directive. Vietcong snipers picking off a few men were routing whole companies and battalions. U.S. advisers showed the Vietnamese how to dispatch squads to kill or drive off the snipers. The Americans were pleased when a directive on their methods of dealing with snipers went out from corps headquarters."

"A few weeks later, however, the tactical genius of the Vietnamese military mind came forth in a new communiqué. It instructed units coming under Vietcong sniper fire to withdraw—leaving ambushes in case the sniper charged."

U.S. EQUIPMENT WASTED

Here is another problem reported by Mr. Moore, from his own observations: "Secretary McNamara talks about sending more supplies and equipment to help the Vietnamese win their war against communism. This is fine, except that by and large the Vietnamese have no concept of maintenance, much less preventive maintenance. Unless Americans are maintaining the equipment here it quickly deteriorates from sheer lack of care—and then the Vietnamese ask for more."

RESCUE—OR FLIGHT?

Vietnamese pilots were taught to fly U.S. helicopters, then eight helicopters were turned over to them. The Vietnamese painted parts of the helicopters yellow—the color of their flag. Then the Vietnamese took over the flying of rescue flights to evacuate Vietnamese wounded from jungle combat areas.

Mr. Moore tells how this worked out.

"I had heard so many stories about the Vietnamese pilots flying over the evacuation site at 5,000 feet, well out of range of ground fire, and then flying back without even try-

ing to get 5/22/10 would be the best way to go along on an all-Vietnamese evacuation flight."

"For 15 minutes the chopper pilots circled the clearing. Finally the chopper in which I was riding descended almost into the clearing. Then it popped up into the air like a cork released under water. The crew chief examined the fuselage for bullet holes. There were none. So the chopper started to drop in again. Lower and lower we hovered. I saw a wounded man, smiling, being helped toward the helicopter. Then suddenly the helicopter began to rise again. The last thing I saw was a sudden hopeless expression wipe out the game smile on the wounded man's face. Vietcong ground fire had apparently frightened the Vietnamese pilot off, although he later told me he was afraid the clearing was too small and the rotor blades would hit the trees—this after he was already less than a foot from the ground."

"Over and over again," Mr. Moore says, "U.S. advisers reported the terrible fall in morale among the Vietnamese troops when they realized that their own pilots were afraid to come down in Vietcong-invested jungles to pick up the wounded. The ground troops automatically gave up hope when they saw the yellow streak on the choppers high above."

WHY VILLAGERS DESERT

Vietnamese strategy is to clear an area of Vietcong Communist forces—and then try to hold that area while clearing other areas. But Mr. Moore reports:

"So far, holding operations by the Vietnamese alone have not been successful."

One instance is cited where Americans trained thousands of mountain tribesmen, cleared the area. Then the camp was turned over to the Vietnamese. Result: "Less than 2 months after the Americans pulled out, the Vietcong attacked, drove the Vietnamese out of the fort and destroyed it." Another example:

"In a program to get the Montagnards away from the Vietcong—preventing them from feeding the Communists or joining them, either willingly or by imprisonment—the tribesmen were taken from their villages in the mountains and brought into new villages built around forts garrisoned by Vietnamese troops. But the Vietnamese troops refuse to leave their forts after dark. So the Vietcong come into the villages at about 6 p.m. and stay the night, giving political orientations, eating, imposing taxes, and punishing villagers suspected of cooperating with the Government. In the morning, the Vietcong leave and the Vietnamese troops take over until evening."

"Until the Vietnamese muster the courage to go out at night and patrol the areas they are supposed to be securing, the entire 'clear and hold' concept is a joke."

"With no protection at night, the villagers know that death and torture will be their lot if they cooperate with the Government. Hundreds of tribesmen are moving back into the hills. As long as they are going to be dominated by the Vietcong anyway, they prefer to be in their own home mountains. And then, of course, they are turned into hardcore Communists when the Vietnamese Air Force bombs and strafes their villages because they deserted their Government hamlets to go back to Vietcong territory."

SOLUTION: U.S. CONTROL

After watching the war in Vietnam for 4 months, this American writer has reached this overall conclusion:

"Until the Vietnamese military develops the will to win and the courage to face the enemy unflinchingly by day or by night, even if outnumbered, the war against communism in Vietnam will not be won—no matter if we pour in \$3 or \$4 or \$5 million a day in aid."

"The only realistic solution that most Americans see in Vietnam is for the United

States to take operational control of the war away from the luxury-loving, coup d'état-minded, casualty-fearing Vietnamese officer corps until such time as they can develop the leadership necessary to win the war. If we do not take operational control, we merely waste lives and money in a hopeless stalemate."

As Brave Men Die

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

HON. BRUCE ALGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 1964

Mr. ALGER. Mr. Speaker, as the House meets today in all probability an American boy will die in South Vietnam. It is likely he will be plunged to death in a piece of obsolete equipment fighting a war that is not a war. In those last agonizing moments he may wonder why he is fighting in South Vietnam and why he is dying.

For all those brave young Americans who have already died there, we in Congress must find the answers. We must demand to know why our boys are being sent into battle with old and worn-out equipment. We must demand of the administration that we win the war there or get out. To pursue our present policy is to condemn to death more young Americans.

In the Washington Daily News of Monday, May 11, there is a story of the tragedy in South Vietnam written by a correspondent on the ground there, Jim G. Lucas. The News also had an editorial on the Lucas article, "Brave Men Betrayed." I would like to include both these items as a part of these remarks.

I would also like to ask at this time, in the name of the families of Capt. Jerry Shank, Robert N. Brumet, and all the others who have been killed in this Communist inspired war, Mr. President, do we want to win the war in South Vietnam? Why haven't our fighting men been given proper equipment? Is this a political war, Mr. President, that will be called off after the election next November? The people have a right to know and they haven't been told the facts about South Vietnam. What is your answer to the Lucas article, Mr. President?

The two items from the News follow: Jim G. Lucas Tells How Obsolete Equipment, Used as Bombs, Are Death Traps for Our Vietnam Pilots

(The accompanying story from South Vietnam by Jim G. Lucas was submitted in advance of publication to U.S. Air Force headquarters here. It was read but official comment was declined.)

(By Jim G. Lucas)

SOC TRANG, SOUTH VIETNAM, May 11.—The Communist Vietcong didn't kill Jerry Shank.

His plane did.

Nor did they kill Bob Brumet, of 2311 Shelton Street, Bethesda.

His plane killed him.

Here we are, the most powerful nation on earth, boasting every day of our superiority in modern arms, and we send our young men out to fight a ruthless, determined foe with equipment long past its prime.